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TO THE ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER.

On the subject of choosing, in case of a vacancy, a Member to be the Colleague of Sir Francis Burdett.

Botley, 28th May, 1816.

GENTLEMEN,—We are now all well convinced, that the real cause of the evils, with which our country is afflicted, is the want of a reform in the Commons' House of Parliament; and, therefore, it becomes our duty to take into our serious consideration what we ourselves ought *to do* in order to assist in the producing of such reform. It becomes us, too, to enter upon this consideration *in time*. What man is there, who, in his private concerns, puts off to the last moment, the preparation for the adopting of any step, which he deems essential to his prosperity or happiness? And, therefore, if we deem parliamentary reform essential to the prosperity and happiness of England, do we act the part of good and true Englishmen, if we neglect to consider and to discuss, while there is time for consideration and discussion, what measures we ought to adopt, and that are within our power, for the restoration of those blessings to our country?

There are various ways in which you are able to serve this great national cause; but, in no way so effectually, as by a just and judicious exercise of your right of choosing your representatives in Parliament, which right you and you alone really and practically possess; and, it being, in my opinion, of the utmost consequence to the success of the cause of reform, that your next choice of a person to have the honour of representing you and

of being the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett should be fixed on a man the most fit in the whole kingdom, I have thought it my duty to address you upon the subject.

As an introduction to the remarks which it is my intention to submit to you, and, indeed, as the grounds on which those remarks have appeared to me to be the more pressingly called for, I will first state, in as brief and clear a manner as I am able, certain circumstances which came to light at the recent celebration of the anniversary of the glorious triumph of principle over corruption in the City of Westminster.

That triumph, Gentlemen, was so complete; it was, as Mr. Windham, in a speech in the House of Commons, confessed it to be, so "unmixedly meritorious;" it was, in itself, so honourable, and, in its effects, so beneficial to our country, that I always feel respect and gratitude towards those who in any degree, distinguished themselves on that memorable occasion. And, if I now am compelled to call in question the conduct of any of the individuals to whom I allude, I beg you clearly to understand, that I impute that conduct, by no means to evil intention, but to error. Of the political errors of *others*, I am well aware that it becomes nobody to speak with more lenity than myself; for, though justice has been seldom done to me in this respect, I shall, I hope, never think of denying justice in return.

Being invited as a guest to the Dinner on the 23rd of May, I went, as requested by letter, to the private room of the Stewards, where I saw the *List of Toasts*, which had been prepared by the managing committee. I need not tell you, Gentlemen, that Toasts, upon such occasions,

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contain opinions, well weighed beforehand, and intended to go forth as the solemnly promulgated sentiments of the meeting. It is, therefore, of the greatest consequence, not only that the sentiments be sound, but, that, if particular persons be placed at the head of them, the names of those persons should stand on the List in the Order in which the persons themselves stand, as public men, in the estimation of the Meeting.

On the list, of which I am now speaking, stood, first, "*The People*;" next, "*the King*," and then "*the Princess Charlotte*," with an appropriate sentiment subjoined to each. Next came "*Sir Francis Burdett*," and after him "*Lord Cochrane*," the two representatives of the City of Westminster. Thus far all was unexceptionable; but, what was my surprise upon seeing the next in order, "*HENRY BROUGHAM, Esq. the enlightened advocate of the people's rights!*" This surprise, however, was soon changed into indignation, when, after a long list of Toasts, and some, too, at best, of very trifling import, I found almost at the very bottom of the List, and even after the name of *Mr. Curwen*, who was one of the first to "rally round" Perceval in order to send Sir Francis Burdett to the Tower under the escort of a regiment of guards; when, even after *this* name, I found that of *Major Cartwright*! The venerable and venerated Major Cartwright; the *real* advocate of the people's rights; he who has literally spent a life in advocating those rights; he to whom we owe more, perhaps, than to any other human being, the still existence of sound constitutional principles; the man who is beloved by every friend of freedom who ever heard the sound of his name, and of whom even its bitterest foes dare not, for their own character's sake, speak with disrespect; the man, whom Sir Francis Burdett, during his admirable speech, in an hour afterwards, distinguished by way of excellence

as "*the honest, true-hearted Englishman!*"

Gentlemen, I am afraid, that my conduct and language, upon making this discovery were not precisely such as sober reason would have dictated even under circumstances so irritating. I will, therefore, not detain you by a detail of that, to which I look back with no pleasing sensations, but will proceed to the result, which was, that, in consequence of a declaration, that, if my tongue did not fail its office, I never would, in silence, sit in the room and hear the name of any man living toasted, after the two Members, before Major Cartwright, Mr. Brougham's name was taken out, and that of "*the honest, true-hearted Englishman*" introduced in its stead, and in that amended order the name of the latter was given at the dinner.

Yet (and at this you will be astonished), the List of the Toasts, as originally drawn up, was afterwards sent for publication, and was actually published in the ADVERTISER, which it is well known, I believe, has the greatest circulation of any daily paper in London; and this, too, notwithstanding the toast of Mr. BROUGHAM was never given at all, he having, long after the company had dined, sent an apology for not attending.

Thus by the means of *somebody*, I do not pretend to say of whom, a very gross misrepresentation of the proceedings of the meeting was sent forth to the public, and this misrepresentation, too, upon points of the greatest consequence. Through the means of this publication, a meeting of, I believe, about four hundred gentlemen, assembled together from all parts of England, and some from Scotland and Ireland, having Sir Francis Burdett as Chairman, stand exhibited to the nation at large, as having placed Mr. Brougham the first in public merit after the Members for Westminster, and as having preferred even Mr. Curwen before Major Cartwright!

Why, Gentlemen, were there no other

motive than that of rescuing a meeting, at which I was present, from such foul disgrace, that motive alone would be sufficient to call forth this address. But, there are other motives, and those much more powerful, by which I am actuated upon the present occasion, and which will induce me to cast aside all reserve of every description.

I had, for sometime, known, that it was the intention of certain persons, who have been active in Westminster, to endeavour to promote the views of Mr. Brougham, which evidently were to obtain a seat for that City; and, the Toast before mentioned, especially when I looked at the order in which it stood, appeared to me to be a complete confirmation of what I had heard upon the subject. You will please also to bear in mind the curious circumstances attending Mr. Brougham's, appearance at, and disappearance from, the last meeting in Palace Yard. All the persons, who were present at that numerous meeting, know, that Mr. Brougham was formally announced and introduced to the Meeting by Mr. Wishart; and, that the Meeting were informed by the last-mentioned gentleman, that they would be *presently addressed by Mr. Brougham*. He did not *name* Mr. Brougham here; but, the description and allusion were too plain to be misunderstood. In short, it was clear, that this occasion had been fixed on for the purpose of *introducing Mr. Brougham to you* as a preliminary to further proceedings, which scheme was defeated in the manner, which I will presently describe.

Before the Meeting in Palace Yard took place, a meeting had been held by a *Committee* to settle upon what should be moved and urged at the Palace Yard Meeting. At this meeting of the Committee *Mr. Brougham himself attended*; and, which I beg you to bear in mind, there was agreed upon, while he was present, a *Re-*

solution, to be moved at Palace Yard, containing an expression of *the thanks of the people of Westminster to the Opposition Members for their having supported the rights of the people*. Upon this resolution's passing (of which the framers had no doubt), Mr. Brougham was, of course, to come forward and address the people in return.

Therefore, when the Resolution was *moved*, he stood ready for the performance of his part of the ceremony. But, to the utter discomfiture of the whole project, Mr. Hunt came forward, and *opposed* the motion of thanks, which motion, when put to the vote, you *negatived* without one single dissenting voice. Mr. Brougham, however, did not wait for the *decision*. Mr. Hunt had not half finished the statement of his objections to the vote of thanks, when Mr. Brougham thought proper to *withdraw*; or, more properly speaking, to *decamp*.

Now, Gentlemen, it is necessary that we call to mind, that since the meeting in Palace Yard, it has been stated in the newspapers, that Lord Castlereagh has, in the House of Commons, taunted Mr. Brougham with this mark of the people's disapprobation, and especially with the *precipitate retreat* from your presence; and, the newspapers have also informed us, that Mr. Brougham, asserted, in answer, 1st, that the *only* objection made to him, was, that he was *a lawyer*; and, 2nd, that he did not appear at the Palace Yard Meeting with *any intention to speak*, he *not being an elector of Westminster*!

Gentlemen, I should be sorry to impute wilful falshood to any person of respectability, and more particularly to a person, of Mr. Brougham's great talents. But, how are we to account, then, for Mr. Wishart's *announcing Mr. Brougham to the meeting*? How are we to account for his telling the meeting to expect to *hear* that gentleman speak? How are we to account for Mr.

Brougham's going upon the hustings, erected for the use of the speakers? How are we to account for Mr. Brougham's attending the previous Committee of arrangement, at which Mr. Wishart also attended, and to attend at which required him to be an elector as much, or more, than to speak required it? In short, it would be to trifle with you; it would be to insult your understandings, to pretend to believe, that the whole thing was not prepared for the introduction of Mr. Brougham's speech, as much as any piece was ever prepared for exhibition at a theatre. And yet, if the report of the debate in the House of Commons be correct, Mr. Brougham did assert, that he went to that Meeting *without any intention to speak!*

The scheme having, however, been frustrated here, the misled friends of Mr. Brougham seem to have resolved on making another effort at the dinner of the 23rd. I was, therefore, particularly attentive to what I saw going on for this purpose; and, the scheme was, as you have seen, once more blown to air. But, seeing that it might again be revived; seeing the parties so pertinacious, I thought it my duty not to let slip the occasion of respectfully offering my opinion to the company upon the subject of their choice (in case of a vacancy) of a gentleman to be the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett. And, in order to avoid the possibility of being misunderstood, and, if possible of being misrepresented, I put my opinion upon paper, in the form of distinct propositions, which paper I read to the meeting, or company, in the following words:

"That it is now manifest to all men, that
"the evils, under which our country labours,
"arise solely from the want of a
"Constitutional Reform in the Commons'
"House of Parliament.

"That, assembled, as we are, to celebrate the triumph of purity of election in
"this city, it becomes us to think seriously,

"and *betimes*, on what we ourselves
"ought to do, in order further to aid the
"cause of Reform, whenever an opportunity for that purpose shall offer.

"That the City of Westminster, since
"its emancipation from the thralldom, in
"which it was held by the intrigues of a
"crafty Oligarchy, and particularly after
"the admirable manner in which they
"chose the Honourable Baronet who
"now fills the chair, has been deservedly
"looked up to by the rest of the nation,
"as the source of sentiments to be held,
"and of actions to be imitated.

"That, therefore, it is of the utmost importance, that, in no part of the conduct
"of the electors of Westminster there
"should be any thing, in the smallest degree, equivocal; and that, more especially in their choice of a person to be
"the future colleague of the Honourable
"Baronet, their conduct should be such
"as to leave not the smallest doubt in the
"mind of any human being, that the Citizens of Westminster will never rest satisfied with any thing short of a full and fair
"representation and annual Parliaments.

"That we ought to feel, as to this
"great national cause, the same degree of
"earnestness and anxiety, that we feel
"for the success of any weighty private
"concern; that when we wish to preserve our property or our lives, we resort to the aid of the lawyer and the
"physician whom we deem most likely
"to effect the purpose in view, wholly
"casting aside all considerations of delicacy, all the ties of private intercourse
"and of friendships; and that, unless the
"electors of Westminster, in the case contemplated, entertain and act upon, the
"same sort of earnestness and anxiety,
"the cause of Reform must materially
"suffer.

"That, if a man can be found, whose
"attachment to the cause of Reform can
"no more admit of doubt than can the ex-



“istence of the sun ; whose zeal and perseverance in that cause surpass all that was ever heard of, of those qualities, in any other man ; whose experience, knowledge, and talents, as applied to this subject, stand wholly unrivalled ; and, if to these it be added, that he is an English gentleman, born and bred, of fortune independent and of character perfectly spotless ; if such a man can be found, who will say, that such a man ought not to be chosen ? And, who will say, that such a man is not found in Major Cartwright ?

“That, as to the effect of this choice (leaving aside the indulgence of those feelings of gratitude which we all entertain) it would set a great and striking example to the country ; it would give the Oligarchy a blow that would make it hang its head abashed ; it would enable the venerable champion of Reform to meet its enemies face to face ; it would waft on the wings of even the hired part of the press those facts and principles, which, in spite of all his exertions, are now confined by a partial and narrow calculation ; and, if even a few years (for he has courage to hear the calculation) should deprive us of him for ever, they will, at any rate, have been so many years of glory to the cause, and so many years of shame and confusion to its foes.”

This paper, which was read by me just after Major Cartwright had spoken, had been written about two hours before the dinner, but had been shown to nobody, and I never had mentioned the subject to Major Cartwright in my life. It was not intended to propose the paper as *Resolutions* to be adopted by the Meeting. I merely read it, after a short introduction, as the expression of my own deliberate opinion ; and, I was happy to perceive, that it contained an expression of the opinion of the Meeting, signified by its unqualified approbation. During the re-

maining part of the evening, after the Chairman and Major Cartwright had retired, a Gentleman asked me to give him a copy of the paper, in order to his having it published. Having no copy, I gave him the original, which has not been returned to me. But I can safely trust my memory for every sentiment ; and, I believe, for every word.

Now, Gentlemen, though I cannot more clearly express my opinion than I have done it in this paper, as to *who ought to be chosen*, the occasion calls for some remarks as to *who ought not to be chosen* ; and, I have no scruple to say, that Mr. Brougham ought not to be chosen on any account. I object to him, in the first place, because he is a lawyer, practising at the bar. In the long list of lawyers, who have, during this king's long, *very long*, reign, been members of parliament, there has not been *one*, who, first or last, has not become a hearty feeder upon the taxes, in one character or another. After *fifty-four years of experience* in this way, you *must* believe, that nothing short of a real, bona fide *miracle* could possibly produce an exception in favour of Mr. Brougham ; that is to say (as Wilberforce said the other night), nothing short “of the immediate interposition of Divine Providence,” for this especial purpose.

But, Gentlemen, this, though, in my opinion quite sufficient, is not the only, nor is it the greatest, objection to Mr. Brougham as a member for Westminster. This objection is immovable, unless Mr. Brougham will throw off the gown and wig ; for, it is impossible to believe, that the *same cause*, be it what it may ; be it ambition, be it love of money, be it love of fame, be it love of power, be it rivalry ; it is impossible to believe, that the *same cause*, which can induce a man to retain the wig and gown, when he well knows that they are a ground of suspicion as to his political fidelity, will not continue to operate, and that it will not,

first or last, place him upon the list of tax-eaters, who must of *necessity* be enemies of a Reform of Parliament. It is impossible for me to say how much of *the taxes* go directly into the hands of lawyers; but, when you consider the long list of lawyers who are employed by the government, I do not think you can estimate the sum at less than *two millions of pounds a year*; a mass of temptation too great for frail mortals to resist, while they have gowns upon their backs and wigs upon their heads.

Besides, what *proof*: no, I will not ask what proof Mr. Brougham has ever given of his attachment to the cause of Reform, I will ask what *symptom* he has ever given of such attachment? He has had many opportunities of distinctly declaring his sentiments upon this subject; but, upon no occasion, in the House or out of it, has he ever declared himself resolved to pursue a Reform of the House of Commons. Never has he given any *pledge*; never has he made any *promise*; never has he, upon this subject, uttered a clear and *unequivocal opinion*. But, on the contrary, he has *spoken* and *written* AGAINST a Reform, such as Sir Francis Burdett and you wish to see adopted. These speeches and writings would, of themselves, weigh nothing at all with me, if he had *now* come manfully forward, and, acknowledging his past errors, declared his opinion to have been changed, and his conviction, from experience, that a Reform ought to take place. I bring no charge against him on account of what he said or what he wrote, upon this subject, four years ago. He is now four years older than he was then. Men live to grow wiser. Stocks and Stones, in the shape of men, never, indeed, fall into error; but, then, of what *use* are Stocks and Stones to the cause of Reform, or any other cause, which demands mind and talent? But, from Mr. Brougham you have had no declaration of an altered way of thinking; and, if he were now to be cho-

sen by you, he would be perfectly at liberty to *oppose* Sir Francis Burdett and all the Petitioners for Reform, even including yourselves.

But, though Mr. Brougham has made no declaration of his change of opinion upon the subject of Reform, he appears to me to have made, by his conduct as to other matters, a pretty clear discovery of the use to which he would apply the weight which he would acquire from being chosen by you. I could mention a dozen, but I will content myself with one instance, which has occurred, during the present session of parliament; and that is, that he gave his decided approbation to the Bills, brought in by Castlereagh, to *make legal* the *transporting* and *imprisoning* of Napoleon, whom Mr. Brougham himself acknowledged to be a *prisoner of war*. He asserted, upon this occasion, that *all the nation approved of this part of the conduct of the Ministers*. Was this true, Gentlemen? Did *you* approve of that conduct? No; for you petitioned, in the most earnest language, against interfering to force the Bourbons upon the French people: and what were the transporting and imprisonment of Napoleon but a part, and a very essential part too, of the measure of forcing the French people to submit to that Family, which they had twice cast out? You are well convinced, that Napoleon was really the object of the French People's choice; you are convinced that he still *is* the object of their choice; you see a large foreign army kept up in France, partly at our own expence, to prevent the Bourbons from being chased out a third time; you see the scaffolds in France streaming with the blood of a people who cry out for Napoleon's return; you see, that all the cruelties of despotism and persecution have, over one half of Europe, followed closely upon the heels of that fall of Napoleon which was effected by immense German armies, subsidized by us; and, while you have all these

objects before your eyes, while your hearts are filled with anguish for the sufferers and with indignation against those who have been the cause of the suffering, you hear Mr. Brougham assert, that the *whole nation approve* of the act which was intended to consummate, and put the seal upon, that series of deeds, by which those sufferings have been produced ! And yet, there are persons weak enough to hope, that you can be prevailed upon to choose this very Mr. Brougham as the *colleague of Sir Francis Burdett* !

Gentlemen, Mr. Brougham is reported to have said, upon the occasion here referred to, that the transportation and imprisonment of Napoleon were justified by the *law of nations*. Mr. Brougham is a lawyer ; and I challenge Mr. Brougham here, seeing that he did not give me an opportunity of challenging him at the anniversary Dinner, to produce from *any* writer on the law of nations, a single precedent, a single fact, a single rule, maxim, principle, or opinion, which, if fairly stated or interpreted, will justify, or apologize for, this ever-memorable deed. He acknowledged Napoleon to have been a *prisoner of war*. Well, Gentleman, and did he not cease to be a prisoner of war *as soon as the war was at an end* ? It is said that *his government did not demand* his release. But, did that circumstance authorize us to detain, and even to transport him ? Did it authorize us, too, to sieze on his private property, and even to deny him any correspondence and any thing to *read*, except what our Ministers should approve of ? If, at the close of a war, prisoners made during that war be not demanded by their government, they become free at once, and may go whither they please. Our *Alien Law* would have enabled the Ministers to refuse him a residence here ; but, by the law of Nations and the law of England he was at liberty to go to any other country that he chose. If we may transport and imprison for life

prisoners of war not demanded by their government, why may we not hang and quarter them ? If this circumstance gives us a right to deprive them of their liberty and property, why not to deprive them of life ? Suppose, that, at the close of the next war with France, Sir Francis Burdett, by some accident, should happen to be a prisoner of war in that country, and that the Ministers should not think proper to demand his release ; are you ready to allow, that the Bourbons would have a right to transport and keep him a guarded prisoner on a rock for life ; and, moreover, to sieze the property they might find in his possession and to cut him off from all correspondence and all means of knowing what was passing in the world ? Are you ready to allow this ? No : you feel your blood boil at the idea. Yet, according to the principle of Mr. Brougham, the Bourbons would have a right to act thus towards the Honourable Baronet.

So far from its being true, that *the whole nation* approved of this measure, the fact is, that a very great majority of the sound and enlightened part of the nation decidedly disapproved of it ; and, as you well know, that, greatly to their honour, the *Duke of Sussex* and *Lord Holland* entered and recorded their solemn protest against it. But, if Mr. Brougham could, by his conduct upon this occasion, secure the approbation of the weak, the timid, whose alarms had deprived them of the power to be just ; if he could, as to this great point, side with the Oligarchy ; and, if he could, at the same time, by his blandishments and intrigues, prevail so far over the minds of a well-meaning Committee as to induce them to work in the paving of his way to a seat for Westminster ; if he could do all these, at one and the same time, his prospect of the Attorney-Generalship, and, perhaps, of the post of Prime Minister, was as fair as heart could wish. But, Gentlemen, passing over his direct opposition to the motion of Sir

Francis for receiving a petition against the Scotch Judge; his expression, during his speech on the Liberty of the Press, that *there wanted only one or two little improvements* to make our present practical constitution *perfect*; and his occasional compliments to *Castlereagh*; passing over these and many other objectionable things, with which I will not weary you, is it to be tolerated, that any body shall propose to you to choose this gentleman as the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett?

In this gentleman it is impossible to discover any thing but great ability, without any fixed principle as to the object that you have in view; without any pledge, any declaration, any even the smallest security, or ground of hope, that that ability will not be employed *against*, instead of *for*, the efforts of Sir Francis Burdett and yourselves in the cause of Reform; and with recent instances before you of active and strenuous support of deeds hostile to every principle of general freedom and of common justice; adding thereto that long experience bids even the most credulous to take warning against him barely on account of the profession, to which he belongs, and which, out of hundreds of thousands, has never yet, in our country, produced one single politician firm in attachment to the liberties of the people. In Major Cartwright, on the contrary, what do we behold? Not only a man, whose efforts in the cause *have been* the efforts of a life; towards whom for us not to feel the highest possible degree of gratitude would pronounce us to be almost unworthy of the name of men; not only a man to whom we are *already* so much indebted, for I will here leave the *past* wholly out of the question; but a man on whose political integrity and courage we can always safely rely; whose principles are as well known to us and are as dear to our hearts as is the name of England itself; who has no other care upon his mind than that which arises out of his anxiety for

his country's freedom; who has no other object in view than that of accomplishing the restoration of that freedom; who is secure against temptation of every kind that corruption can imagine; whose purity of character, whose generosity of sentiment, whose inflexible adherence to justice, whose unconquerable perseverance, whose knowledge and whose talents mark him out as the man worthy of being the associate of "Westminster's Pride and England's Hope."

To such a man what can be objected? What can be discovered as a reason for his not being, as the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett, preferred before *any* other man? I have never heard but one reason even *hinted* at, and that is *his age*. Age is never urged as an objection to kings, seldom to Generals, Admirals, Chancellors, or Ministers. Age is not, as to the capacities of man, to be reckoned merely by *number of years*. Some men are much older, in this respect, at fifty, and even at forty, than Major Cartwright is at seventy-five. In this, the only true way of estimating, as to our present purpose, Mr. BARON MASERES, who is *eighty-five*, is much younger than many men are at *fifty*. He performs all his duties as Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer, which duties are various and important, with as much regularity and in every respect as well, as he performed those of Attorney-General in Canada fifty years ago. Few men in England write, or speak, with more fluency, more precision, or more force; to which I take this opportunity of adding, that very few indeed have acted, as to politics, so disinterested, or, in any respect, so honourable a part. Degenerate and base as the times are, there are still some worthy men left in England; and, if their names should ever be collected, that of *Maseres* will certainly occupy a prominent place.

If it could, with truth, be said, that the mind of the great champion of Reform

had begun to discover any symptoms of feebleness, or that his body had relaxed in its part of its necessary exertions; if either his pen or his tongue had begun to falter; even *then* I would say, let us hasten to avail ourselves of what remains of his valuable life. But, such is not the case. If we look at the latest productions of his pen; if we listen to the last speech from his lips; if we keep in view his daily and almost hourly exertions: every thing tells us, that he unites what we so seldom see united, the wisdom of age with the vigour of youth. Besides, if age has its disadvantages, it has also its advantages. To treat age with disrespect is always a proof of an unfeeling and profligate mind; and, when to the circumstance of age is added that of unblemished character, they, of themselves, have a weight of no inconsiderable importance.

After all, however, the main consideration, is, the *effect* which would be produced in favour of the cause of Reform by the election of Major Cartwright. It would show to the whole kingdom; to the enemies of Reform as well as to its friends, that Westminster was resolved never to yield this great point. The enemies of Reform, in the House, would have to contend with two instead of one; and, that additional one having nothing else to do in the world but to combat against them. I defy the press, in spite of its hireling character, to suppress, or to prevent the effect of, the speeches, to which the House must and would listen. The nature of the subject would thus become better understood; men would more frequently have it in their mouths; a new and great interest would be excited. The bare circumstance of carrying the veteran patriot down to the House upon the heads of two hundred thousand men would be a demonstration of public discernment, public spirit, and public resolution, that would make corruption hang her head; and most sincerely do I believe, that,

after such a demonstration, the cause of the people would speedily be crowned with success; and that our liberties, our peace, prosperity and happiness would be established upon a sure and lasting foundation, and that, too, without any assault, or any encroachment, on the rights of the Church, the Nobles, or the King.

Having thus expressed my conviction, that such would be the effect of the step which I have taken the liberty to propose to you, and knowing your earnestness and sincerity in seeking such a result, I shall hardly suppose it possible, that any one will not have anticipated, and concurred in the opinion, that Major Cartwright ought to be elected to the *exclusion* of Lord Cochrane, even if the Noble Lord, from his father being still alive, should remain eligible. My opinion goes to the preferring of Major Cartwright before every other man living as the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett. But, having thought it necessary to be thus explicit with regard to the Noble Lord, justice to him and to myself also requires that I should go a little further, unwilling as I am longer to trespass on your attention.

Let me first observe, that my feeling towards Lord Cochrane is that of unfeigned respect. My confidence in his honour and integrity are undiminished. Without affecting to have any particular intimacy with his Lordship, I may say, that, as to the circumstances, which have harassed him for the two last years, I have had better opportunities of judging than the public in general. I can also say, that, from the first to the last, as far as related to the affair of the *Hoax*, I applied myself with all possible diligence and care to discover the real truth, especially after the appearance of the affidavit of his Lordship. And now, at the end of two years, having read all that has been published, and heard all that has been publicly said, upon the matter, I express

my thorough conviction, that he was entirely innocent of every part of the offence laid to his charge. Further I dare not go, or I would also express my conviction as to what I deem to have been the real cause of his sufferings.

You, entertaining the same conviction, showed not less soundness of judgment than generosity of feeling by sending him back to the House after his expulsion. You acted upon principles which are amongst those that do most honour to the human heart: a love of fair play, and a scorn of the idea of deserting the oppressed. But, Gentlemen, having satisfied what you deemed (and, I think, rightly deemed) the demands of justice; having amply discharged your duty towards Lord Cochrane, your country, your distressed, your harrassed, your pauperised country, has now a demand at your hands, and that demand stands prior to the private feelings not only of one individual, but, to those of any half of the nation.

Gentlemen, look at Ireland; look at her miserable millions! Look at England, swarming with paupers, and convulsed in every limb of her body. Look at the shocking scenes at this moment passing under our eyes. Look at the military array; contemplate the approaching punishment of the unfortunate creatures, who, ignominious as their end may justly become, are still Englishmen, and still our countrymen. Do you believe, that these evils and this disgrace will ever have an end; do you believe, that there is any remedy for them, other than that of a parliamentary reform? If you do not, the plain path of duty is, to do all that lies in your power to effect that important end; and then the only remaining question is, which is the person most likely to advance that end, Lord Cochrane, or Major Cartwright.

In the particular case of the *expulsion* of Lord Cochrane, there was a motive which *cannot again exist*; for, it will

hardly be pretended, that *every* man, who has suffered from similar causes, ought, for that reason solely, to be chosen a member of parliament. If this were the case, there would be a great abundance of persons most amply qualified to receive your suffrages. Mr. LEIGH HUNT and his brother, for instance, have suffered most severely; and they have suffered, too, for what you and I, according to our wild notions, deem a *merit* instead of a *crime*. Yet, no one seems to think, that Mr. LEIGH HUNT ought to think his feelings wounded by your preferring Major Cartwright before him. There is, too, another feature, which distinguishes the case of his Lordship from that of Mr. Leigh Hunt. Mr. Hunt's sufferings *originated* in nothing that you and I deem a *fault*; whereas Lord Cochrane, though we deem him innocent of all knowledge of the *Hoax*, certainly would have avoided the charge altogether, if he had abstained from that pursuit, which is laudable in no man, and, *in him*, very indiscreet. If, indeed, an act of indiscretion had been committed in any attempt to defend, or assert, the people's rights; and, if that act of indiscretion had been made the ground of proceedings, ending in great mortification and suffering to him, the obligation on you to persevere in re-choosing him would have been more weighty. But, if we look at the case as it stands, the suffering did not *originate* in any thing done, or attempted to be done, for Westminster in particular, or, for the public in general. That my Lord Cochrane did nothing more than many others do, and than many *gentlemen* do, is certain. We know, that the laws against gambling in the funds is set at nought by thousands, and that the paper-system has converted the country into one great gaming house. But still there is a *something* that sticks to the pursuit, which makes it unbecoming in such a person as Lord Cochrane, and which, even in many

really good men, has excited a prejudice injurious to any political cause in which his Lordship is embarked.

It appears to me, therefore, that it is inconsistent, not only with public duty, but with common sense, to consider Lord Cochrane as an obstacle in the way of Major Cartwright; but, besides this, I am morally certain, that an attempt to re-choose his Lordship would *fail of success*; and, when it is considered, that, by making that attempt, you will expose yourselves to the hazard of seeing a creature of Corruption foisted into one of your seats, there cannot, it appears to me, be the smallest room for hesitation with any man, who has sincerely at heart the triumph of the cause, for which we have so long been contending. Nay, judging of Lord Cochrane by myself, and forming my opinion on what I have always observed of his character, I venture to assert, that he would be amongst the last men in the country to recommend any attempt which might, in its result, prove injurious to that cause.

With the venerable Major your path is smooth as glass. There are no rubs, no obstacles, no drawbacks, no prejudices, no exceptions. You all know him. All England knows him. His name is synonymous with every thing that is patriotic and virtuous. The wonder will be, not that Westminster has done herself the honour of choosing him at the age of seventy-five, but that she has not done herself that honour long ago. His life exhibits a rare instance, not only of long continued exertion, but of still more rare patience and disinterestedness. The fittest amongst the fit to be chosen himself, he has always been labouring for the election of others. Animated solely by his desire to promote the happiness and true glory of his country, he has never sought for himself that distinction, which, I trust, gentlemen, is reserved to be conferred on him for the public good, by the

enlightened and patriotic City of Westminster.

With a deep sense of the gratitude due to you from the whole kingdom for the benefit which it has derived from your excellent example,

I remain

Your friend and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

PROTESTANTS IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.

(*Sir S. Romilly's Speech continued from p 672.*)

The fact was however, that no acts of violence were committed during this interval—no persons were insulted—no houses attacked—none were killed, at least in the town of Nismes, though it was said that some stragglers of the Duke d'Angoulemé's army were murdered by the peasants. Upon the 15th of July many of the royal volunteers, as they were called, returned to Nismes; numbers of armed men flocked in from the country, and required the garrison which held it in Bonaparte's name to surrender. This garrison, consisting of about 200 men, consented to lay down their arms; but they were all of them, with the exception of a few who contrived to make their escape, massacred as they came out of their barracks. For some successive days the whole of the Protestants of Nismes were exposed to outrages of every kind; their houses were plundered or pulled down, the rich were laid under contributions, the looms of the poor manufacturers were destroyed, women were stripped and scourged in the streets; no less than 30 females were subjected to this atrocity, one of whom was far advanced in pregnancy. He would repeat what he had stated on a former occasion, that 200 persons were murdered in cold blood, besides 2,000 individuals who were persecuted in their persons and property. One man, a Mr. Lafond, far advanced in life, these wretches threw from the balustrades of his own staircase, and, on still discovering some signs of life, they cut him to pieces, with their sabres. The seven sons of a Mr. Leblanc, and the five sons of a Mr. Chivar, were murdered. A wretch of the name of Trestaillon was the

chief leader in these atrocities. This man, hearing that Chivar the father was confined to his bed, came to his house, and asked the wife to let him see her husband, affecting to feel for him; but, immediately on being introduced, he shot the old man dead with a pistol. This monster in human shape had been twice taken into custody, but he had never yet been punished by the French Government. [Hear!] He had boasted of the murders he had committed. One of the first acts after the 17th of July, the period when Nismes reverted under the Royal Government, was to disarm the urban guard, which it was declared should exclusively consist of Catholics: and he should have to state an order of the new authorities, that all persons should be disarmed who could not belong to the national guard, which was equivalent to declaring that their intended victims should be disarmed, in order to their execution. In one place these infuriated persons dug up the body of a young man, and burnt it, together with the house of his father. In short, every kind of atrocity was committed. He was speaking now of persons who were murdered in cold blood, and not taken with arms in their hands. It was proper here to inquire what steps were taken by the French Government to prevent these excesses. The King had appointed the Marquis d'Arbaud Joucques Prefect of the department of the Gard. He arrived on the 30th of July, and issued a proclamation for the purpose of protecting the Protestants from the fury of their persecutors. In consequence of this he was ill-treated on his appearance at the theatre. They insisted that Trestailon should be released, which was accordingly done. This Prefect was still continued; and under such circumstances could any man say, in the language of the Duke of Wellington, that the French Government had done every thing to protect its Protestant subjects? The disturbances at Nismes still continued. The 21st of August was the important day fixed for the election of Deputies to the Legislature. He read from the official journal of the Gard the proclamation of Devallon, the Mayor of Nismes, on the eve of the feast of St. Louis, recommending to the people to abstain from the employment of squibs and crackers, and reminding them that

the least disturbance would throw great responsibility on the magistrates. What was the amount of force which this Mayor then had at his disposal? It was twenty-four companies of national guard, and three of cavalry. There was another proclamation issued on the 30th of August, in which he states, that many murders had been committed, the perpetrators of which concealed themselves in darkness. These, he said, had profoundly wounded his heart; but he ascribed them all to unknown agitators, who in this way abused their love for their king. What were we to think of a government which ascribed these murders to misguided demonstrations of loyalty? They are then reminded that such crimes could not be justified, because crimes of the same kind had been committed during an usurpation blasted by Heaven, and detested by man. But what was the fact? The national guard which was at the disposal of the Mayor had never exerted themselves during all these days to prevent the perpetration of the murders. It might be worth mentioning, that M. Trinquelague, a lawyer, who was chosen one of the deputies to the legislature, and lately appointed Secretary-General to the Minister of Justice, was the person who, after the first restoration, proposed that a silver image should be dedicated to the Virgin, in the event of the pregnancy of the Duchess D'Angouleme. It was also worthy of remark, that on the 24th of August another military force entered Nismes, exclusive of the national guard, when tranquillity was restored, and continued as long as they remained. The national guard was marched into the mountains of the Cevennes, where the people had remained in perfect tranquillity, though they were now treated by the national guard as in a state of rebellion. The Austrian troops that were soon after sent into the Cevennes, in order to disarm the inhabitants, declared, on the contrary, they had never seen a people more peaceably disposed. They quitted the country on the 25th of October, and the same system of murder was recommenced. Besides the infamous Trestailon, there was another notorious murderer of the name of Quatremaillon. Trestailon had been sent away from that part of the country, but punished he had never been. In fact, not one of the persons concerned

in these numerous atrocities had been brought to punishment; they still roamed about at large, though well known to most of the inhabitants of Nismes. He had to notice another proclamation of the Prefect, in which he spoke of an indignation, too natural not to be excusable, having burst on the heads of the disaffected; but, illegal as it was, he adds, it was not stained by plunder, and popular indignation had not been disgraced by robbery. The Honourable Gentleman then proceeded to advert to the opening of the Protestant churches at Nismes, on the 12th of November, when General Lagarde was severely wounded. Many of the congregation were besides wounded and maltreated. On the 1st of September, 1815, another proclamation was issued, which still used the language of persuasion to murderers. He made no doubt that the Noble Lord was much better acquainted than himself with all these facts; but the House would take into its consideration the extreme difficulty of procuring authentic information. There had been no difficulty, indeed, in publishing any thing against the Protestants; the conductors of the journals were permitted, nay, they were even courted, to publish statements against those persons; but the police would not suffer a single paragraph to be inserted with regard to their sufferings. He was himself present in the Chamber of Deputies, when a discussion took place on the personal liberty of the subject; and because, one of the Representatives, Monsieur d'Argenson, stated, that there had been persecutions in the south of France, a great part of the assembly rose in a most tumultuous manner, and in the coarsest terms insisted that he should be called to order. He (Sir Samuel Romilly) then saw a gentleman in his place who was present in the French Chamber on that occasion, and he appealed to that Honorable Member to corroborate this statement. The President yielded to the cry of the House, and Monsieur d'Argenson was called to order. It was notorious, however, that only six days before he made that speech, the blood of the Protestants was flowing down the streets of Nismes, and it was only a fortnight before that the King's General was wounded; and yet he was called to order for stating that there had been a persecution in the south. [Hear, hear!] When

General Lagarde was wounded at Nismes, the King published a proclamation on the subject; and —

Sir GERARD NOEL rose to call the honourable and learned gentleman to order. It seemed to him, that the House would act very unwisely, if they should allow the Honourable and Learned Gentleman to proceed with these details. He had been admitted into the Chamber of Deputies by courtesy, as an English gentleman on his travels; and he had no right to make use of what he then heard for the purpose of grounding an inquiry in the English House of Commons. It would be a great breach of confidence in the Hon. and Learned Gentleman, [a laugh,] and was derogatory to the high character and dignity of the House. [Repeated laughter and loud calls to Sir Samuel Romilly to proceed.]

Sir SAMUEL ROMILLY said, he could easily remove all embarrassment from the mind of the Honourable Baronet, with respect to being guilty of any breach of confidence, as he was only stating what the French government itself had permitted to be published in all the newspapers on the following day. [Hear, hear!] He repeated, that there was no hesitation whatever on the part of that government in publishing every thing against the Protestants. The four deputies of the department of La Gard published in the *Quotidienne* a sort of protest against the King's proclamation, and declared that the tumult was excited only by a few old women. On the 12th of November the prefect issued a proclamation, and, in the name of the department, promised a reward of 3,000 francs to any person who should make known the name of the individual who had shot the General, and bring him before him. This man, however, had not been prosecuted or punished; nay, he had not been seized, though his name was well known to be Boisset. The proclamation of the King said, that an atrocious crime had been committed; but what followed? It called upon the magistrates to disarm all the Protestants; and why? Because, as the prefect stated, a tumult had been excited by a few old women! On the 19th of December, the mayor published a proclamation, stating, that the Protestant churches should be re-opened on the following Thursday, and an assurance was given to the people

that the Protestants should have churches built out of the city. Of the two churches of the Protestants at Nismes, one had been bought by themselves, and the other was given to them by the government; but, instead of these, they were to be permitted to build two new ones beyond the walls of the town at their own expense. Now, he would ask, what had this to do with politics? What had this to do with Bonaparte? The House would see that all this was purely religious. On the 9th of January the King published another proclamation, stating, in the first place, "that his orders had met with that respect and submission which he had a right to expect." But what was the nature of this respect and submission?—only that the Protestants had been disarmed. It then declared, "that the temple of the Protestants was open, and that they enjoyed all the protection of the law;" and it concluded with "his Majesty's thanks to his good people of the city of Nismes." This must be considered as a kind of general amnesty; and the fact really was, that not a single individual had been prosecuted or punished. The present condition of the Protestants certainly was so far in a state of security, that since the month of December no murder or cruelty had been committed; but he had been informed by a gentleman who had recently arrived from the city of Nismes, and on whose veracity he could place the utmost reliance, that the Protestants were continually driven away from the public walks. Whenever they ventured to appear in such places, they were jostled by the very persons who had murdered their wives, their husbands, brothers, sisters, and dearest relations. The prisons were now filled with Protestants who had been apprehended on the charge of sedition. In the several departments of France there were not less than 19,000 Protestants in custody upon this pretence. Some were imprisoned for five years, some for ten years, and others for longer periods, on the charge of having sung improper songs. [Hear, hear!] It seemed a most extraordinary thing, that crimes so atrocious as those which he had mentioned should be suffered to pass unpunished, and that such trifling offences as singing a few songs, should be visited in this terrible manner. It was a strange feature of the administra-

tion of justice in any country; but that on which he most relied was, that no person had been yet brought to trial. He did not intend to move that there should be any immediate address to the crown on this subject; but he contended, that the Protestants had suffered, not for seditious conduct, but only on the suspicion of entertaining particular opinions. All that he meant to ask for was, that an humble address should be presented to the Prince Regent, that he would be graciously pleased to lay before the House copies or extracts of all correspondence between his Majesty's government and the government of France, relative to the Protestants in the south of France. He made this motion in no spirit of hostility against ministers, but to give them an opportunity of making a statement more in detail than had yet been done. He could give a long list of names of persons who had been murdered at Nismes, but he did not consider it necessary in this stage of the business. Because they were Protestants, they were said to be Bonapartists; and the Catholics, who had been suffered to persecute them, were called Bourbonists. The Noble Lord would have an opportunity of correcting this error, if it were one; and he should be glad to hear that government had used all the means in its power to put a stop to these crimes. In concluding his remarks, he might advert to what had been done by our ancestors on similar occasions: and if precedents were necessary, he need only recal to the recollection of the house what he had recently done for the negroes of Africa. But surely the Protestants of the south of France had equal claims upon our generosity and benevolence, and we ought not to suffer them to be persecuted, imprisoned, and murdered, without some remonstrance to the government which was bound to protect them. At the very moment when these dreadful scenes were acting in Languedoc, Paris was in possession of three Protestant armies, and the King could not look out of the windows of his palace without seeing the cannon that was planted before it. He did not state this for the purpose of bringing a charge against his Majesty; but if he neglected to send assistance to his Protestant subjects, it was the duty of those who commanded the foreign armies to protect and defend them. The French govern-

ment did nothing but give words and make professions; but it was still in our power to interpose all good offices in this case. Tumults had recently arisen in various parts of France; and if disorders should again break out, who could tell what might be the situation of the unhappy inhabitants of Nismes? He trusted that the House would consider what a heavy responsibility was then upon them, and that, as they would answer to God and their consciences, they would not refuse protection when it was in their power to afford it. [Hear, hear.]

LORD CASTLEREAGH said, that the House must have listened with great pain to the speech of the Hon. and Learned Gentleman, as they must certainly lament to hear that persecutions for religious opinions were still practised in any part of Europe. He did not mean to make any invidious reflection, but he must take leave to say, that the Hon. and Learned Gentleman had drawn a most exaggerated and unfairly coloured picture. The Hon. and Learned Gentleman had placed him in a most embarrassing and painful situation. He had addressed himself to the House as to a tribunal that had jurisdiction to inquire into all the circumstances; but if they had even the means of arriving at the truth, they had not the means of applying a remedy to the evils. He must enter his protest against the false policy of interfering with the internal situation of the affairs of other countries, more especially with respect to religious opinions. The Hon. and Learned Gentleman had dwelt with great pains upon the centuries that were gone by, as if he wished to rouse all those bad passions which, he should hope, had been long buried in oblivion. He had also adverted to the impression made on the public mind by the conduct of certain individuals; and had stated, that a sort of countenance was given to their exertions by his Majesty's ministers. If he imagined, however, that government was disposed to encourage those persons, he was certainly incorrect; for they were satisfied, that, notwithstanding the benevolent motives by which those bodies might have been actuated, they had done more harm than good to the cause in which they interposed. He knew that it was not possible to discourage the efforts of individuals, but he was confident that

his Majesty's government would have lost sight of their duty if they had encouraged them. It was a question of prudence to look at the cases of former interference, and every man who viewed them with an impartial eye, would consider what the spirit of toleration was working in favour of religion. There was a time, indeed, when religion was made a pretence for imposing a system of government, and then the Protestant powers were obliged to stand together: but we were now placed in a situation in which we might suffer christianity to effect its own work. He did not say that one government could not communicate on this subject with another; but he did say, that if one government at this day would suffer a foreign state to interfere with it because it administered its laws according to its own conception, that government would be degraded in the eyes of all the world. But suppose we should be rash enough to interfere with another state on this account: if we were not listened to, what would become of our dignity? Was the Hon. and Learned Gentleman prepared to state, that he wished an appeal to arms? [Hear, hear!] He was the more astonished at the Hon. and Learned Gentleman's proposal, when he found he had not laid the ground for it in the general situation of the Protestants: on the contrary, he had told the House that his was not a charge of religious persecution; he had told them that the evil was local—that it was confined to the department of the Gard—that the Protestants derived their liberty from that man who owed the loss of his life and crown to his benevolence: had he been more vigorous, the world would have been spared those scenes of calamity that had since overwhelmed the whole of the civilized globe. He had commented on the acts of the French government and the proclamation of the king himself. It would be invidious for him (Lord C.) to enter into critical disquisitions on that proclamation, but he was persuaded that the king felt the most sincere desire to put down the hostile feeling against the Protestants: he had not only tolerated but indulged them, and their miseries were only the result of a local feud, such as we had but too often seen in parts of this empire, and which all the force of government could not put down at once. Was he (Lord C.) to tell

the House, that in the country to which he belonged, a feud, a dispute, which appeared religious, but which was totally unconnected with religion, would often disturb a province for years? In the county of Armagh sects had for two years been waging war with each other, and the whole power of the arm of the law was found insufficient to repress them. Did the House forget the present state of things in Ireland, and would they have us advise a foreign country to interfere in the cause of the Catholics of this country? (Hear.) He was sure that such an interference would not be endured. Whilst there was but one common feeling—that of deep grief on the unhappy calamities in France, and an anxious desire to see them terminated; whilst the Hon. and Learned Gentleman himself admitted that no outrages had been committed since December, and now, after such a lapse of time, he came to harrow up the feelings of the House with the recital of calamities we could not redress, he (Lord C.) had hoped that he would lay the question at peace, instead of colouring the proceedings on one side as highly as he might, if he had pleased, those of the other—instead of inflaming the passions of two sects who were tearing each other to pieces. This was an act of disrespect to the French people, and not an act of benevolence, whatever might be the motives of the Hon. and Learned Gentleman. He (Lord C.) could not consistently with his public duty acquiesce in producing to the House all the correspondence that had passed on this subject. If ever there was a question on which parliament and every good man should be silent, it was this. He did not mean to deny that communications had passed which had convinced his Majesty's ministers, that though the French government was in the exercise of a power so recent that it could hardly be productive of any great and immediate results, yet that his most Christian Majesty had been most serious in his efforts to repress all persecution. He agreed with the Hon. and

Learned Gentleman, that the situation of the Protestants of France had for a long time been a source of pain to every liberal mind; but the emancipation of the Protestants commenced early in the revolution; it had been followed up; and they enjoyed a degree of freedom they had never known before. Without imputing blame to the sect, without denying that they were a most enlightened people, he should contend, that having acquired an extent of power, and that from Buonaparte, they felt interested in the continuance of his power: their conduct showed that they felt this, and had led to a jealousy which was the cause of the present disturbances. If he were to believe the Hon. and Learned Gentleman, and the various publications on the subject, he must imagine that the Catholics had not suffered or been provoked at all, and that this was a gratuitous persecution of the Protestants. Indeed, the Hon. and Learned Gentleman had touched so slightly on the wrongs or provocations of the other side, that though he admitted a few individuals had been sacrificed, yet it would appear from his statement, that in general they had no cause for complaint. He (Lord C.) did not mean to give official information to the House, but he would read a passage from a letter which he believed to be written in a fair and impartial spirit. It contained the opinions of an individual whose sentiments he wished to receive, because he went out with a mind pure and unbiassed. This letter would bring one point on which the Hon. and Learned Gentleman had touched slightly—the provocations and wrongs of the Catholics—into open view. "Both parties are to a certain degree right;" that was, the Protestants were mixed up with Buonaparte, and imputed to the Catholics jealousy and political dislike; while the Catholics, who adhered to the Bourbons, were afraid of the designs of the Protestants.

(To be continued.)